

Nagarjuna's a Drop of Nourishment for People

and its commentary

The Jewel Ornament

Translated by
Dr. Stanley Frye

A DROP OF NOURISHMENT FOR PEOPLE
and
THE JEWEL ORNAMENT
A COMMENTARY

A DROP OF NOURISHMENT FOR PEOPLE

by

Nagarjuna

&

THE JEWEL ORNAMENT

A COMMENTARY

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Publisher's Note

We are happy to bring out this revised edition of *The Drop of Nourishment for People* by the great philosopher and metaphysician Nagarjuna and its commentary *The Jewel Ornament,* both taken from the Mongolian academician Damdinsureng's monumental "The Hundred Best Works of Mongolian Literature".

Translated from the Mongolian by the professional linguist Dr. Stanley Frye, the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives is happy to publish it in the series of translations from Mongolian beginning with *Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish.*

We hope all the readers of Nagarjuna and Buddhism will benefit from it.

Director
Library of Tibetan Works & Archives
September 1994

Translator's Note

The works of the great Indian-Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna (circa 200 A.D.) whom, Heinrich Zimmer in his "Philosophies of India" calls one of the subtlest metaphysicians the human race has yet produced, have now become partially available to Western scholars thanks to the research, scholarship and publications of Lamotte: *Le Traite de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nagarjuna,* Murti: *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism,* and Ramanan: *Nagarjuna's Philosophy as Presented in the Maha-Prajnaparamita-Shastra.* Nagarjuna's Middle Way which demonstrated the non-ultimacy of specific views and the non-substantiality of specific entitles and man's ultimate nature as being itself the Unconditioned Reality, the Undivided Being, has influenced Buddhist philosophical thought for almost two thousand years and may, conceivably, with the translation of his works, yet have an influence on Western thought.

Nagarjuna's literary output was enormous. In addition to his great works on philosophy and metaphysics, Bu-ston in his *chos-'byung* (History of the doctrine in India and Tibet) lists twenty other works by the great philosopher dealing with commentaries, tantra, medicine, alchemistry, theory and practice of the Doctrine, conduct of monks and laymen, instructions for kings and ministers, and advice on worldly polity or conduct.

The following translation, *A Drop of Nourishment for People,* Sanskrit: Nitishastrajantuposanabhindu, Tibetan: lugs kyi bstan bcos skye bo gos pa'i thigs pa, Mongolian: Arad-i tejigekui dusul kemeku shastir, belongs to the latter class of works and is a guide for the Buddhist layman in his every-

day activities while living in the world. Its translation was from Mongolian which is, of course, a translation from Tibetan which in turn was translated from the original Sanskrit in which Nagarjuna wrote. Both *The Drop of Nourishment* and the commentary, *The Jewel Ornament* were taken from academician Damdinsureng's monumental *Monggol uran jokiyal-un degeji jagun bilig orusibai* (The Hundred Best Works of Mongolian Literature) published by the Institute of Language and Literature of the Committee of Sciences and Education of the People's Republic of Mongolia, Ulan Bator, 1959. The translator wishes to express here his appreciation of Professor Damdinsureng's labor of love in making these and many other valuable Buddhist texts available to readers of Mongol.

Stanley Frye

Nagarjuna's
A Drop of Nourishment for People

1

Homage to Manjushri, the source of all good, the splendor of all,
He who with loving compassion is benign to all beings,
The compassionate refuge, the benign splendid one,
Homage to Manjushri, the supreme refuge of all beings.

2

Although an ordinary man with no skill in poetry,
I shall compose some verses, minute as a drop of water,
Which will be like a lamp that shines in pitch darkness,
And a help to benighted people of poor intellect.

3

Do not needlessly talk about others' faults.
If you begin by mentioning others' failings,
Very soon you will be talked about in turn
Like the silly woman and the fox. (1)

4

In general, do not praise yourself.
The man who habitually lauds himself
Is usually of little account and poorly thought of,
Like the Kalandaka that boasted and put on airs. (2)

5

Never trust a crooked, evil friend.
If you do, his faults will harm you
Just as the lice in the yogin's robes
Were destroyed because of the nasty flea. (3)

6

Don't make suggestions to an ill-natured person.
Your intentions may be good, but there'll be trouble,

Just as long ago the cantankerous ape
Destroyed the little kalandaka's nest. (4)

7

In all you do, act with caution.
Immediately renounce all careless behavior.
Never, at any time, allow your acts
To be like those of an uncontrolled elephant.

8

Whenever you talk to other people,
Weigh and consider every word.
If you prattle all kinds of nonsense,
It is like the ravings of a madman. (5)

9

Never use thoughtless words or empty talk.
Think of what you're saying, and don't lie.
Rash nonsense will harm both you and others,
As when the panicky parrot told a lie. (6)

10

Don't deceive others for your own gain.
When you begin to fool others with awful lies,
Everyone will know that you are a liar,
As in the story of the starving cat. (7)

11

Don't act with needless cunning or deception.
When one follows the path of untruth and hypocrisy,
No one will trust him or take him seriously,
As in the story of the Nyaya brahmin's wife. (8)

12

Never follow the advice of a false, selfish friend.
If you do what cunning, bad friends tell you,
Sometime you will be badly deceived,
As when the monkey deceived the turtle. (9)

13

Never believe soft, artful words.
If you do, you will surely be deceived,
As when Indra, king of all the gods,
Fooled the asuras so badly. (10)

14

When an evil person talks to you—be on guard.
If you accept what a good-for-nothing says,
Trouble will most certainly come to you,
As when the angry falcon deceived the fox. (11)

15

If you make friends with an evil man,
Share his thoughts and agree with him,
That friend will some day become a demon,
Like the female demons on the island in the sea. (12)

16

Great wealth and property among fools,
Never-failing courage among heroes,
A sage who always gives the right answer—
Rare indeed are these things in the world.

17

All knowledge should be diligently studied,
Joyfully, as naturally as breathing.

Because the aimless man, void of science and learning,
Is as stupid and meaningless as an animal. (13)

18

The mouth of the man without true knowledge
Is ugly and useless as a gaping h0le.
As lovely as an exquisite lotus
Is the mouth of the man of real knowledge.

19

If you want to eat bread, start plowing in the spring.
If you want good milk, feed the cow in the winter.
If you want to attain excellence, study when young.
These three are basic rules for obtaining results.

20

If you seriously study, you can attain excellence.
How can the arrogant muddle-headed become great?
They are like old, dried-up cows.
Hang pretty bells on them, and they still have no value.

21

Although yourself endowed with virtue and knowledge,
Do not, in excessive pride, despise others.
Always maintain a humble attitude,
Restrain your knowledge without boasting.

22

Never underestimate a man with knowledge and wisdom
Just because he is not famous or is poor.
Long ago a sharp-witted rabbit
Fooled and killed the haughty lion. (14)

23

If you help everyone without contempt or flattery
Like the brilliant sun that shines on all,
Your intentions and aid will be true benefits,
As when the tiny mouse freed the elephant from the pit.(15)

24

In some things be like trampled grass.
In some things be like blazing fire.
In some things labor like a slave.
In some things remain immovable as a mountain.

25

When you live with another and depend on him
And he supplies your food and living,
Even if he offends and despises you,
Try to bear it without malice.

26

Although friends for long with an evil man,
Having aided him with food and drink,
He will forget your kindness and harm you in return
Like the story of the man who fell into the well. (16)

27

The man of certain conduct cannot long be friends
With the unstable person whose behavior changes.
What is such an inconsistent person like?
—Like a cheap cloth that quickly fades.

28

When those who are learned and wise
Wish to totally defeat a hateful man,

They instruct him kindly, without harshness or quarrels.
When he attains the Supreme, that man is overcome.

29

To carry on one's back all the realms of the world,
The great sea, Mt Meru, the four continents—no burden.
But not repaying or remembering all the benefits that are given,
This is the terrible burden of compensation.

30

He who never forgets the good done him by others,
Who remembers favors and repays kindness,
He whose thoughts are kind and honest,
Him do the great ones help and praise.

31

Great peace comes to him who follows the Dharma without confusion.
He is like a peaceful crossing in a rushing torrent.
When one ceases to antagonize others or to strive against them,
And when great pride ceases, peace comes.

32

The man who delights in excessive pride and bragging,
Who, for his own profit, is a friend of evil men,
Keeps company with the mighty and tries to equal them,
Never will his mind find peace.

33

Haughtiness, pride, violence, quarrels, obstinacy and whims,
Because of the nature of things, should all be cut off.
Even a famous man, if his pride and anger are great,
Will without question lose his good name.

34

The old, little children, the sick,
Helpless beings, the impoverished,
Those oppressed by the mighty, and those who suffer —
Evil indeed is the man with no pity for them.

35

When living in the land of others,
Far from your own country and people,
Although common people offend and bother you,
Bear it without malice or retaliation.

36

He who bears suffering has fortitude.
He who performs feats has honor.
He who understands what is difficult is sharp-witted.
He who can retaliate is mighty.

37

Help the cruel man of evil thoughts,
And he will forget all your help and aid.
He will be angry, contradict you and harm you.
When he comes up in the world, he will insult you.

38

For prosperity to last a lifetime is quite rare.
Complete for a moment, it quickly declines.
When everything goes to pieces and disintegrates,
Sit quietly, and don't be like the crow in the story. (17)

39

When there's a shortage of goods in your district,
When your friends seem to have let you down,
When your hated enemies get into power,
Remain calm, don't resort to harsh words.

40

He who is enraged because he cannot imitate the great,
Who bickers like a jackdaw with false tricks,
Who envies the brazen and shameless,
Such a man will estrange his own son.

41

Don't go out of your way to honor evil men.
Place no confidence in name and fame.
When a high position is reached, one harms many,
Like the fox in the story that painted himself blue. (18)

42

There are fools who delight in scandalous sins,
Justify their acts and give in to passion.
To attain their goal they do harm to many,
Like the turtle that deceived the birds with its teeth. (19)

43

Those of weak mind, never thinking of the future,
Always fussing and worrying about themselves,
Struggling and thirsting for things and success,
Are like wild beasts who run into the hunter's net.

44

Those who are drunk in their silly conceit,
Totally unaware of their faults and shortcomings,
Priding themselves on their unimportant virtues,
Are like the story of the turtle in the well. (20)

45

Some blind people, ignorant of the fruits of action,
Neither studying nor meditating on the Dharma and virtue,

Constantly justifying their wrong behavior,even taking pride
in it,
Are like the fools who go to sea and bring back stones. (21)

46

Some unfortunate ones, the very stupid,
Forgetting death and what will come then,
Thirsting and striving for what is not needed,
Are unaware that Mara is deceiving them.

47

If you are attached and succumb to desire,
To forms, male-female, the lovely and pleasing,
Degeneration comes and you'll be destroyed
Like the moth that dies in the burning flame.

48

Property, wealth, food, cattle,
Things, horses, inheritance, whatever is collected,
Will all be abandoned and death will come,
Like waking from a dream in which you've found a son. (22)

49

He who constantly collects deeds of sin and evil,
Performing not a single work of pure virtue,
Concerned and worried about the things of this world,
Madly striving for success in this lifetime,

50

Will suffer in this life and have no peace.
Will experience the tortures of hell in the next;
Confused, stupid, will again suffer in the Bardo,
His deeds before him as though in a mirror.

51

Inevitably to die while in one's own homeland,
Forever to wander and suffer in terrible places,
For the fruits of action to mature without error,
Are like the stories about Udpala, the nun. (23)

52

Try to understand the true nature of things.
Remember that the time of death is uncertain.
Think about the deeds that you do.
Make efforts to benefit others.

53

To think of this life which lasts but a moment
As unending and cling to it is a terrible error.
Like the magic creations of the female demon,(24)
Death comes in a second and your destination is uncertain.

54

Do not make the error of thinking you are eternal.
Think of the miseries of the three evil states.
The three sins of the body: killing, etc. —
With all your might abstain from committing them.

55

The four sins of speech: lying, etc.,
The three sins of the mind: malice, etc. —
When one makes great effort, controls them, cuts them off,
This is the Way of the Dharma trodden by the saints.

56

Burnt by terrific heat, frozen in awful cold,
The tortures and agonies of the eighteen hells,

Ever starving, dying of thirst—sufferings of that kind,
Think of these frightful pains every day.

57

All the different sufferings of the poor dumb animals,
All the agonies of that state—think about these.
Remove the cause of birth in the three evil states,
Find birth in the peaceful states of gods and men.

58

Having obtained this hard-to-obtain human body,
On this occasion which is so unique,
Exert yourself with unremitting strength of will.
Cut off the sins that hurl you into a birth of suffering.

59

Having obtained this excellent human body but not following Dharma,
The poor people pass on, saying: 'Prayers at the end'.
But in the end they find an evil state and are tormented,
As the people who died in the land of Takasila. (25)

60

Alas, our life is totally uncertain.
The time left consists of years, perhaps months,
Death comes quickly, today, perhaps tomorrow.
With steadfast minds let us strive and make efforts.

61

Of the two: the Chinese woman who followed the Dharma,
And the Cakravartin monarch attached to this life,
The Buddha had shown that the former was better.
Taking this as an example, cut off attachment to this life.

62

Those who have no devotion to the Supreme Dharma
And shamelessly busy themselves with the things of this life
Will finally come to grief and be despised by many,
As in the story of the black magician of Birala. (26)

63

Mountains, gorges, ravines, and precipices,
One is cautious not to fall into these.
But falling into the abyss of hell —
Why don't you stop to think of this?

64

When you get a tiny cut, neither painful nor dangerous,
Nor sensitive nor irritating, you have it dressed.
But the wounds in the terrible frozen hell —
Why don't you stop to think of this?

65

When you take a short trip or a little journey,
You buy supplies and pack a lunch.
But the pretas' misery of starvation throughout a whole aeon—
Why don't you stop to think of this?

66

If your hand or foot is pricked with a briar,
Your pampered body revolts in pain.
The agonies of the animals that are shot and killed —
Why don't you stop to think of this?

67

A moth springs from a tree and eats it.
A plant grows from a seed and empties it.

A fire burns from wood and destroys it.
A man collects evil and suffers.

68

Prudent is the man who thinks of the next life.
Virulent is the man who suppresses the kleshas.
A Dharma-man is he who has no greed or cunning.
Wise is the man who knows right from wrong.

69

One who gives without regret has charity.
One who acts correctly without hypocrisy follows the precepts.
One who considers action and result without vexation has patience.
One who thinks of death and makes efforts has exertion.

70

When you get beyond this life's distractions, this is dhyana.
When you discern truth without error, this is wisdom.
When you strive for Buddhahood, this is faith.
When you clarify misty discrimination, this is yoga.

71

Unattached to relatives or wealth, one practises meditation.
With thoughts of aiding beings one becomes a superior man.
Living without falsehood and in truth, one is honest.
Thinking of the true nature of action, one is fearless.

72

When one refuses to follow the true doctrine,
And is constantly attached to harm and evil,
These quickly mature within one's own self,
Because in cause and effect there is no error.

73

If you have wealth and it is not used for charity or virtue,
But you use it to harm and oppose others,
You will become degenerate and tormented,
As in the story of 'Repulsive' in the city of Sumara. (27)

74

If, through envy, one harms a friend,
One will suffer much in this lifetime.
One will also be tormented in a future life,
As in the tale of the brahmin's son called Fox. (28)

75

Walk calmly, without excitement or arrogance.
Speak the truth frankly, without deception or guile.
Dwell in peace and mildness, without whims or quarrels,
Act agreeably and smile when you talk.

76

Do not babble many useless words.
Do not, unthinkingly, walk into a riot.
Do not drink wine or other intoxicants.
Be as charitable as your means allow.

77

Have compassion and help the lower forms of life.
Exert yourself to the utmost in Dharma and virtue.
Keep pure the oaths and vows you have taken.
Do this and peace and joy will be yours.

78

The evil people of the present age of depravity
Have brought the Enlightened One's Doctrine near to destruction

Those benighted ones, unlearned, and with wrong views,
who engage in the harsh careless ways of these times!
The Lord Shakyamuni's teaching, the precious, lovely law,
is nearing its end.

79

Some, in his period of deterioration,
Abandon Sakyamuni's Teaching and follow desire.
Attached to debauchery, dishonesty, and forgetting the future,
They trample and soil the precious banner of the Dharma.

80

Alas, the Sangha has now abandoned the Dharma.
They practise mischief, hypocrisy, and adorn themselves.
They have cut and felled the precious wishing tree
Of Shakyamuni's doctrine which is the source of peace.

81

The people of this wretched period, attached to desire,
Through the fruits of the various sins they commit:
Gambling, quarrels, arrogance, etc.,
Destroy their own boat that crosses the Round.

82

The crude, obstinate people of these degenerate times,
Through their deliberate sinning and shameless hypocrisy,
Have destroyed and abandoned the bridge that crosses
samsara,
The doctrine of the Buddha, the Shugata.

83

The Dharma—Doctrine of the Omniscient One,
Alas, little remains of it now.
The great ocean of the precious teaching,
Alas, it will soon now evaporate.

84

The marvellous doctrine of the Lion of the Shakyas,
Is slashed on the blades of the wheel of the times.
It will be totally destroyed in the very near future.
If you have faith, hasten to make efforts in the Dharma.

85

Now, in this evil age of degeneration,
If one wishes to turn about and seek happiness,
If not yet seized by the terrible karma of the times,
He must seek the Ancient Way and follow it.

86

The honorable, the wise, the intelligent, are disappearing.
The plain, honest folk are now oppressed.
The evil and cunning flourish.
Obscenity and depravity increase.

87

In this period those who follow the unholy way command.
The terrible destroyers exhibit their violence.
This is the end, when the laws of evil are followed,
And this saving law of the Buddha is destroyed.

88

The age of serenity and well-being has ended.
The time of malevolence and hostility grows.
Few are those who follow the pure path.
The holy ones, the refuges, are rare indeed.

89

Listen! In these evil, dreadful times,
Think of the future and cut off distress.

Dwell in a lonely place where there is no turmoil.
Reside in peace and teach the Dharma.

90

By the virtue of the writing of this shastra
Which tells those unable to follow the Dharma
That which is true and not very difficult,
May there be benefit now and in the future,
And may all beings abstain from wrong-doing.

* * * *

Translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by the Indian Pandit Silendrabodhi and the Tibetan translator Ye-ses-sde; from Tibetan into Mongolian by the Chakhar-gebshi bLo-bzan chul-khrims.

The Jewel Ornament

A Commentary to Nagarjuna's "A Drop of Nourishment for People"

(1)

Do not needlessly talk about others' faults.
If you begin by mentioning others' failings,
Very soon you will be talked about in turn
Like the silly woman and the fox.

.....Long ago, in eastern India there was a married woman who had made a date with another man. As she was going to meet him she was attacked by brigands who took her jewels and clothing and left her naked. Having no place to go to cover her shame, she crawled into a pile of leaves that had fallen from a dal tree that grew on the shore of a lake. Just then a fox came along with a piece of meat in its mouth. Seeing a fish splashing about in the waves, it dropped the meat and jumped into the water after the fish, but the fish disappeared. At that moment a crow flew down, seized the meat, and flew back up into the sky. When the fox returned and found himself empty-handed, the woman scornfully said:

You tried to get the fish and dropped the meat!
Your fish is now at the bottom of the sea!
The meat you left in a safe place is in the sky!
What are you staring at, wiggling your ears?

The fox replied:

At you, a silly, shameless woman!
Who left her good husband for the man of the moment,
Who had her clothes and jewels stolen by thieves,
And has to cover her naked body with leaves.

The moral: because it is certain that whatever you say about others will return to you, be careful about attacking people with poisonous words.

(2)

In general, do not praise yourself.
The man who habitually lauds himself
Is usually of little account and poorly thought of,
Like the Kalandaka that boasted and put on airs.

....There was once a brahmin-boy by the name of Kalandaka who learned the art of polishing jewels. Haughty because he had mastered this trade, he refused to study anything else. The other brahmin boys studied many sciences and arts and eventually came into positions of power and influence. 'Kalandaka' is also the name of a bird. Its story is as follows:

An old man once set a trap for the birds and caught many, including a tiny kalandaka bird. When the net closed on it, it was terrified and tried to peck its way out with its beak. When the other birds struggled and fluttered in panic it was pressed against the sides of the trap, stepped on, and hurt. When the old man came to take the birds out the kalandaka was so tiny that he overlooked it and swept it together with the bird droppings into the compost heap. Three days later a man came and threw hot ashes into the heap, then a rooster came and scratched about in the ashes and the kalandaka said to it: "Oh you who are adorned with the turquoise-jewelled feet, with the lovely tail and the red and gold silken cloak, you who are supreme in wisdom, I like you!" This pleased the rooster who scratched the bird out and it flew away.

The tiny bird then became arrogant, thinking that its verse had delivered it from the compost pile. A swallow flew down and said: "These abilities of yours: lying exhausted in a compost heap for three days, being prodded with a sharp-toothed rake, being caught in a bird net and trampled and squeezed, having your ear crushed and bruised—are not very outstanding. Since you're unable to do better than this, why don't you come and make your home in the old nest

that I have left? I am building another new nest." The tiny bird flew to a thornbush and said: "The gentle swaying of this thornbush—how can the shaking of the tall pine compare? My darting and flying—how can the wing flapping of the eagle compare? I don't recall having been in a net or a compost heap or having been bruised or hurt. Tomorrow I'll make a nest of your old one and the new one you are building I'll take away from you and give to my son." As the tiny bird was babbling this nonsense, a hawk swooped down, seized him, and took him away.

The moral: don't bray about your feeble abilities, nor insult or harm others.

(3)

Never trust a crooked, evil friend.
If you do, his faults will harm you
Just as the lice in the yogin's robes
Were destroyed because of the nasty flea.

....Seven lice once lived in the robe of a great yogin and interrupted his meditations by constantly biting him. The yogin told them: "During my meditation don't bite me. I don't object at other times and will not destroy you." A flea appeared and told the lice: "Friends, you have a good life here. I believe I'll join you." The lice agreed but told him not to bite the yogin during his meditation, that they and the yogin had an agreement. The flea said: "You may have an agreement, but I don't," and bit the yogin while he was meditating. The yogin, thinking that the lice had broken their word, stopped his meditation and removed his robe. The flea quickly ran away, and when the lice tried to explain what had happened, the yogin refused to believe them. He became angry, and threw them on the ground.

The moral: if you're friends with an evil man, trouble is inevitable.

(4)

Don't make suggestions to an ill-natured person.
Your intentions may be good, but there'll be trouble,
Just as long ago the cantankerous ape
Destroyed the little kalandaka's nest.

....A tiny bird once built a nest in a tree in which an ape also slept. One night a terrible rain came and when the bird saw the ape soaked and shivering with the cold, said to him: "Friend, your hands are capable, you have great strength, and are intelligent. Why don't you build a snug nest like mine?" The ape, thinking that the bird was boasting of its nest, became enraged and roared: "Is the likes of you going to insult *me*?", tore the bird's nest down and destroyed it.

The moral: don't make suggestions to a bad friend.

(5)

Whenever you talk to other people,
Weigh and consider every word.
If you prattle all kinds of nonsense,
It is like the ravings of a madman.

...A certain merchant was once walking to market. When he came to a mountain pass he met a madman and asked him if there were any dangers up ahead on the road. The madman said: "On the other side of the mountain—three waters, one fire, that makes four. Three hundred spears, one bow, that makes four. Wherever you go the enemy will come." This terrified the man who returned to his home without accomplishing his purpose.

The moral: no one needs silly words, so cut them off and don't mislead people.

(6)

Never use thoughtless words or empty talk.
Think of what you're saying, and don't lie.
Rash nonsense will harm both you and others,
As when the panicky parrot told a lie.

....King Sugar Cane once went hunting in the forest and caught a parrot that could talk. The parrot said to him: "Your Majesty, this is no time for you to be hunting. The Prince of Malaya is on his way here and intends to kill your wives and children and ruin you." This terrified the king; he killed the parrot, gathered his army, marched on Malaya, and killed many innocent people. When he returned to his own land and found that nothing had happened, he deeply regretted what he had done and knew that the parrot, in its panic, had lied.

The moral: cut off unnecessary lies that may harm others.

(7)

Don't deceive others for your own gain.
When you begin to fool others with awful lies,
Everyone will know that you are a liar,
As in the story of the starving cat.

....There was once a cat that was in the habit of stealing from a monk. One day when the cat seized the monk's rosary and ran, the monk gave chase, and just as the cat jumped into its hole the monk grabbed its tail and tore it off. The cat became ill and began to lose weight and started to think of ruses to get food. It hung the rosary around its neck and quietly took up residence in a valley. When a mouse saw it and ran away, the cat called after it: "Son, have no fear. I am a monk-cat who has taken vows and neither kills nor commits sins. Like me, you should practise the Dharma." The mouse reported this to the other mice, who believed it, and all assembled before the cat to hear the Dharma being taught. The cat told them: "When you have listened to my sermon, line up single file to honor the teacher, then go back single file to your holes." The cat would then catch the last mouse and eat it.

As the mice became fewer in number they began to have doubts and to ask each other about this. The chieftain of the mice, Self-Benefit by name, suggested examining the cat's droppings. When this was done they found hair and bones and knew that they had been deceived. When they again assembled to hear the Dharma, they asked: "Great Teacher, what do you eat?" The cat said: "Only vegetarian food, dried leaves and grass." Self-Benefit then assembled all the mice and told them: "Obtain a small bell and a piece of string from a human's house. We'll tie the bell around the cat's neck and after we've heard the Dharma, we will hear the bell." When the mice again assembled, they told the cat: "Teacher, we wish to show our appreciation and have brought you an ornament," and tied the bell around the cat's

neck. Warned, the mice were able to escape the cat's attacks and returned to their holes safely. The cat said: "Things turned out badly because I didn't cover up my droppings," and that is why cats cover their droppings to this day.

The moral: don't lie to or deceive others.

(8)

Don't act with needless cunning or deception.
When one follows the path of untruth and hypocrisy,
No one will trust him or take him seriously,
As in the story of the Nyaya brahmin's wife.

....In India there once lived a brahmin from whose lips pearls fell whenever he laughed. He married the daughter of a king and had a son by the name of Kumara. One day his wife said to him: "I will not touch any man other than you and my son." Sometime latter, the brahmin found his wife sleeping with another man. The brahmin, in disgust, left her and moved to another place.

Upon a certain occasion a certain king wished to see pearls fall from the brahmin's lips and commanded him to appear before him. As he was going to the king's court he saw a parrot straining water with the feathers of its wings and drinking it. When he asked why it was doing this, the parrot said: "I do this to avoid killing insects that might be in the water." The parrot flew into an enclosure and the brahmin was delighted to see it take a rosary and begin to pray, but then he saw it catch a fly and eat it.

Going on, he came to a village where a householder had invited a monk for a meal. The brahmin noticed that there was a small gold coin lying near the monk and that the monk took a bit of beeswax, fastened it to his staff, and when no one was looking picked up the gold coin and pocketed it. As he was leaving he removed a silk thread that had stuck to his robe and handed it to the household saying: "This thread came off your chair and stuck to my robe. It would be quite wrong of me to take it. I wouldn't wish to commit the sin of taking what is not given."

When the brahmin arrived at the king's palace various games and sports and entertainments were exhibited for him,

but, seeing the deception, he was unable to laugh. That night he was sent to the house of the king's herdsman to sleep. At midnight the king's wife came and the herdsman angrily shouted at her: "Why didn't you come earlier? Now you've ruined my sleep!" Then he beat her with a stick. The queen said: "Your anger is justified," and joined him.

The next morning the brahmin was taken to the court where games were being played. When the king tossed a golden ring at his wife which struck her on the face she screamed. "Ouch!" and cried as though she'd been badly hurt. The thought then came to the brahmin that all women were like his wife. He burst out laughing and pearls fell from his lips. Seeing this, the king said: "What is this? When we showed you sports and games and tricks you didn't even smile, and now you suddenly burst out laughing!" The brahmin said: "My wife who deceived me; a praying parrot that strained its drinking water, then caught flies and ate them; a holy monk who was careful to return a thread but stole gold; a woman who said 'good' when beaten with a stick but shrieked when struck with a gold ring—this is just too much," and roared with laughter as the pearls streamed from his lips. The king asked, "What is the meaning of all this?" The brahmin said, "If you promise not to punish me, I'll tell you." When the king had given his promise, the brahmin explained everything in detail and suddenly the king and the brahmin saw the futility of the round of births and deaths, became weary of it, entered the Sangha, retired to a secluded place and devoted their lives to meditation.

The moral: practise hypocrisy and deceit if you will but there are those who can see through it. Therefore, be honest.

Never follow the advice of a false, selfish friend.
If you do what cunning, bad friends tell you,
Sometime you will be badly deceived,
As when the monkey deceived the turtle.

....One day a turtle climbed up a mountain and met a monkey. The monkey took it to its cave and fed it on various kinds of fruit and it remained there for several days enjoying itself. When it returned to its home in the water its wife asked where it had been. The turtle explained about being the guest of the monkey and the wife thought: "Ha! He has a girl-friend," and pretended to be sick. When she moaned and groaned, the turtle asked what the matter was and if he could do anything to help her and the wife said: "I'm dying. If I could eat a monkey's heart I would become well." The turtle told her that he would find one for her, swam back to his friend the monkey, and told him: "Now you come to my house, I wish to repay your hospitality." When the monkey protested that he couldn't swim, the turtle told him: "True friends should visit each other often. Get on my back and I'll ferry you across to my house." The monkey did this and soon they arrived at the turtle's home. The turtle then said: "My wife is mortally ill and only a monkey-heart can cure her. You must take out your heart and give it to her." The monkey said: "Oh dear, you've made a mistake. Why didn't you tell me this before? We monkeys keep our hearts on the top of a pine tree. Now we'll have to go back." The turtle believed this, again put the monkey on its back and ferried it across the water. When they came to the mountain the monkey pointed to a tall tree and said: "It's up there. You wait down here and I'll climb up and get it and toss it down to you." It then climbed the tree, defecated three times into its hand, and shouted down: "Open your mouth, here it comes," and when the turtle caught the monkey's droppings,

jumped into another treetop and ran away.

Mortally offended, the turtle crawled to the monkey's cave, entered, and waited for it to return. In the evening the monkey came to the mouth of the cave and thinking that the turtle might be there waiting, called out: "Old woman of the cave!" and went away. The next morning and evening it did the same thing, but the turtle remained silent, waiting. The next day when the monkey came and called out the turtle thought, "Evidently there should be someone here that answers," and shouted: "Hey!" The monkey then said:

"Wise is the man who investigates before he acts.
Stupid is the man who complains of the past or future.
For a sound to come out of the cave is a bad sign.
To remain here is dangerous. Better leave,"

and went somewhere else.

The moral: never follow the advice of an evil friend, act cautiously, and watch yourself in everything.

(10)

Never believe soft, artful words.
If you do, you will surely be deceived,
As when Indra, king of all the gods,
Fooled the asuras so badly.

....In ancient times the gods and the titans churned the great ocean by using Mt Meru as a churning stick and the two naga kings as a rope. When the first fire-glass city appeared, they established the sun god and commanded him to illuminate the four continents. They went on churning, and when the water-glass city appeared established the moon god. As they went on churning, a vase of poison appeared and living beings ate it. Then a vase of wine appeared and the titans stole it. But when a vase of ambrosia appeared and the titans also stole this, Indra became angry and, transforming himself into a beautiful maiden, proceeded to where the titans were dividing it among themselves, and told them: "You aren't dividing it according to the custom of the world." When the titans asked what the custom of the world was, Indra told them: "In the world when men seek and find something, it is the women who do the dividing." Because the "maiden" was exceedingly beautiful, the titans gave the ambrosia to her to divide and she told them: "Before drinking ambrosia of this kind one must bathe and purify oneself." The titans agreed, and while they were bathing the maiden took the ambrosia and escaped with it to the land of gods. Knowing that the titans would come to recover it, Indra set the sun and moon as guards, and commanded them to strike the titans with a fiery wheel of knives if they came. Rahu, the chief of the titans, decided to retrieve the ambrosia and, changing his appearance into that of a god, came and sat down in one of the seats of the gods. As the ambrosia was being distributed and just as Rahu was going to take it, the sun and moon saw through his disguise and made a

sign indicating that this was Rahu. The yaksas struck him with the wheel and his head burst into nine pieces but because he had formerly drunk some of the ambrosia, he had become immortal and now grew nine heads. In revenge, Rahu now put a curse on the sun and moon, saying: "You, sun, because you begrudged me the ambrosia when I found it, may people fear you and shield themselves from you. You, moon, will suffer by being eclipsed once every year!" When the sun and moon heard this they made the wish-prayer: "At that time may the virtue of those who have created virtue be increased a hundred-thousand times and may their wishes be fulfilled. By that power may we be released from our suffering."

When Rahu's head was broken garlic sprang up where the blood had flowed and where the ambrosia had been spilled the myrobalan grew. It has been said that when the sun and moon are eclipsed the virtues which one performs are increased and one's wishes come true.

The moral: don't believe the words of a deceitful person and don't covet other people's things.

(11)

When an evil person talks to you—be on guard.
If you accept what a good-for-nothing says,
Trouble will most certainly come to you,
As when the angry falcon deceived the fox.

....At one time a falcon and a fox lived together in friendship. One day when the falcon went in search of food the fox ate one of her fledglings and thereafter ate one each day until they were gone. Although the falcon knew what had happened, she was powerless and simply nourished a grudge.

One day while flying through a ravine the falcon saw a trap which had been set with a piece of meat. She returned to the fox and told him: "I've found some good food in a certain place, let's go get it." The fox followed the bird and when he saw the meat from a distance, said: "That looks like a trap to me." The falcon said: "I'll go and see," and folding her wings close to her body, flew into the trap, and grabbed a piece of the meat. The fox followed her example, entered the trap and pulled at the meat. The trap fell on its head and it was unable to move and in terror it shrieked: "Help! Help! The falcon said: "This is the fruit of the deeds done by my dear friend the rotten, evil fox who ate my beloved babies. Now I have taken revenge." In terror, the fox twisted its head back and forth and whined, but the falcon said: "It's useless to call for help and a man with a club is coming right now." The fox said: "Although the fruit of good and evil deeds is certain, exactly when those deeds will mature is unknown. Your anger is justified and I, a fool, have been bitterly deceived." While the fox was saying this the man who had set the trap came and killed the fox with a club.

The moral: always be on guard concerning the words of a person with evil thoughts.

(12)

If you make friends with an evil man,
Share his thoughts and agree with him,
That friend will some day become a demon,
Like the female demons on the island in the sea.

....Once long ago, when many merchants from India went to sea in search of precious jewels, an unfavorable wind sprang up and blew their ship to the island of the female demons. Seeing the merchants, the female demon transformed themselves into beautiful women, went out to meet them, welcomed them, and finally married them.

The merchants were told not to go north of the city, but their captain, a certain Singala, unknown to the others, went out in that direction and came to a large building made of iron. He knocked on the door and a voice came from within asking who was there. Singala answered: "I am a human being." The voice then asked: "Are you one of the merchants who came from India?" When Singala said that he was, the voice said: "We are also merchants who were blown here by an unfavorable wind. We married the demon women and while we were living with them you came and they put us here and married you. Now they take one of us each day and eat him. Later, when other merchants come, they'll do the same thing to you. These women are not real women, they are female demons." Singala then asked: "Is there no way of escape from here?" The voice said: "For us there is none, but you can escape. To the east of the city there is a lake and each month on the night of the new and full moon the king of the horses, whose name is Valaha, or Mighty Cloud, comes to the shore of the lake to eat grass, drink water, and roll on the golden sand. I have heard the she-demons say that if anyone will hold onto the horse's mane and not be tempted by the women, he will arrive safe and sound in India."

The captain returned, called the merchants together, and told them what he had heard. On the night of the full moon the merchants all went to the lake where they found the horse, bowed to it, and told of their fate. Then Singala climbed onto the horse's back, the others held onto its mane, tail, and legs, and the horse rose into the sky. The female demons, knowing what was taking place, rushed to the lake and cried: "Why are you leaving us? Alas, what will we ever do without you?" and pretending that their hearts were broken, wept loudly. Some of the merchants were deceived; they looked back at the women, and immediately fell to the ground. Those who refused to be tempted and look back were returned safe and sound to India.

The Buddha said: "I was that horse Valaha. At that time those who put their trust in me and attained happiness were without number. In the same way, those who now exert themselves in my Teaching and observe the vows they have made will unquestionably be delivered from the round of birth and death. Those who are perfect in the pure Dharma and in wisdom and rely on the Teaching of the saving Buddha will be liberated from the round, just as those merchants who mounted the horse Valaha were delivered from the island of the rakshashas."

Later Singala became ruler of the empire. He took his army to the island of the female demons, destroyed them utterly, colonized the island with many people, and it is for that reason that the island, which was Ceylon, is now known as Sinhala.

The moral: don't be close friends with evil people.

(13)

All knowledge should be diligently studied,
Joyfully, as naturally as breathing.
Because the aimless man, void of science and learning,
Is as stupid and meaningless as an animal.

....Long ago in India there lived a king who had a son and a brahmin who had a son. The brahmin entrusted his son to different teachers and had him taught the various sciences. The king, pampering his son, did not have him instructed in anything and allowed him to rule. Later, when the prince saw that the son of the brahmin was held in high esteem, was honored by many, and had many students of his own, he said to his father: "My dear father, do you remember the son of the brahmin? He is the same age as I, yet he is highly praised because of his knowledge. I, on the other hand, haven't studied anything and am far behind my friends. I feel like a tiny grey bird alongside an enormous goose and I regret my lack of knowledge."

His father said: "There is no reason for you to feel badly. The brahmin boy may have learning, but he is still your subject. You are his king and master, so why feel inferior to him?"

The son said: "It is true that the timid goose can fly to the mountain top, but how can it compare with the great swan who sits on the lake in delight? An ignorant hoodlum can mount a good horse, but how can he compare with the sage who goes on foot without attachment?"

The father said: "Everyone obeys the command of the king, but who pays attention to the son of a brahmin, even if he is a scholar?"

The son said: "The mouth of an ignorant man is like a useless, gaping hole. The mouth of a man of superior learning is as lovely as an exquisite lotus."

The father said: "A king, even without learning, is far

superior to a learned brahmin because the king is honored by everyone."

The son said: "Yes, a king is honored by his subjects, but when he goes to another country where he is not in command, who honors him then? A wise man, perfect in wisdom, is honored everywhere he goes."

The father said: "A brahmin does nothing but live alone quietly. You are surrounded by friends and are always merry."

The son said: "When a stupid person is pampered by many, he eventually becomes even more stupid. When a wise man of great knowledge lives alone, he becomes even wiser. When many oxen are driven together they lose the track. When the king of the beasts lives alone, his power increases."

The father said: "If you wish to be honored by many, make gifts to your subjects and please them."

The son said: "When one obtains knowledge, he attains the Supreme. How can the empty-headed braggart, attain anything by boasting? It is like an old, dried up cow. Even though you hang a pretty bell on it, it is still without value and will bring no price."

The father said: "Nevertheless, knowledge may be obtained gradually."

The son said: "Those who wish to improve themselves should begin studying when young. Those who want good milk should start feeding the cow in the winter. Those who want a good harvest should plant in the spring."

Therefore parents should see to it that their children study. A son should study because when one studies and learns one easily attains whatever one desires. One should study the sciences and make efforts without boredom and as though one's very life depended on it. The vain person without science or learning is as dull as an ox as far as his own advantage is concerned. Thus has it been taught.

The meaning of "making efforts as though one's very

life depended upon it" is this: in daily life one eats and drinks, put one's clothes on over and over again and goes to all kinds of trouble to accomplish very little and the result of this is boredom. But in studying and learning although one studies and reviews over and over again, the result is the opposite of boredom.

Again: in order to make a living one raises cattle, grows crops, or runs a business, and is burnt by the summer sun and frozen by the winds of winter. One should make the same strenuous effort in obtaining knowledge. And just as one continues to work for a livelihood although antagonized by others, so should one unremittingly exert oneself to attain knowledge in spite of the envy and malice of others.

(14)

Never underestimate a man with knowledge and
 wisdom
Just because he is not famous or is poor.
Long ago a sharp-witted rabbit
Fooled and killed the haughty lion.

....There once lived a certain lion, king of the beasts, who ate an animal each day. When it was the rabbit's turn to be eaten, the lion told it: "Ugly little animals like you don't even fill the space between my teeth, but today it's your turn." The rabbit said: "Nevertheless I have just escaped death from a mighty animal like you who wanted to eat me very much." This enraged the lion and he asked the rabbit: "Where is there an animal that can be compared with me?" The rabbit took the lion to a deep well, pointed, and said: "He's in there." The lion peered down into the well, saw his own reflection, wrinkled his muzzle and roared, made his mane bristle, and shouted threats. The figure in the well did exactly the same; the lion jumped into the well to attack his enemy, and drowned. Here it has been said: "Do not despise an intelligent man because he is not strong physically."

The moral: a man with knowledge can defeat his enemies. Therefore, attain knowledge.

(15)

If you help everyone without contempt or flattery
Like the brilliant sun that shines on all,
Your intentions and aid will be true benefits,
As when the tiny mouses freed the elephant from
the pit.

....Once a mouse fell into a deep hole and, unable to climb out, was starving to death. An elephant heard its pitiful cries, came to see what was the matter and lowered its tail into the hole. The mouse hung on with its teeth, and escaped. Rejoicing, the mouse told the elephant how grateful it was and that it would never forget the favor. The elephant said: "Go in peace now and help others who are in trouble."

Many years later when the elephant had grown old and weak, it also fell into a pit and because the pit was narrow and its body was enormous, it was unable to get out. The same mouse happened to come by, saw the elephant's misery, and called all the other mice in the vicinity. Together they dug away one side of the pit and the elephant was released.

The moral: when you help others this help will return to you. Attain knowledge, therefore, in order to help other beings.

(16)

Although friends for long with an evil man,
Having aided him with food and drink,
He will forget your kindness and harm you in return
Like the story of the man who fell into the well.

....Formerly there was a city on the great plain of Jirah which was eventually abandoned by its inhabitants who moved to another place. A man, a swallow, a mouse, and a snake once fell into a dry well which had been left there uncovered and were unable to get out. While they were suffering from cold, thirst, and hunger, a man came along, found them and, great compassion arising in him, he took great pains to get them out. The four of them then told him: "You have saved our lives, and we will all do our best to repay you," and each went his own way.

Sometime later that compassionate man was reduced to poverty and went hunting in the forest. There he met the sparrow who asked him: "Friend, what are you doing hunting animals like this?" The man replied that he had nothing to eat. The swallow flew to the balcony of the king's palace where the queen was combing her hair and had removed her jewels and laid them aside. The swallow seized the jewels and flew away with them to the man and gave them to him.

The king then made a proclamation: "If anyone knows who took my wife's jewels and can tell me where they are, I shall reward him richly." The man who had been rescued from the well knew that the swallow had given the other man the queen's jewels and, quite forgetting the help he had been given and desiring to collect the reward, reported to the king what had taken place. The king had the man with the jewels arrested and threw him into a dungeon. While he sat there starving and in misery, the mouse heard from the swallow that he was in prison, scratched its way in, and

asked the man why he was there. When the man explained what had happened, the mouse told his friends about it; they all collected food from the neighboring houses, and brought it to the man. Then the mouse went to the snake and told it the man's sad tale. The snake said: "We must release him from the power of the king," and that night crawled into the king's bedchamber and wound itself around the king's neck. Its poisonous breath made the king's body swell and he became terribly ill. Terrified, he called his soothsayers and astrologers who told him: "This snake is the protector of the man you are holding in the dungeon. If you release the man and reward him generously you will recover, but there is no other way." The king had the man brought before him and gave him rich gifts. The snake then uncoiled itself from the king's neck and the king was returned to heath.

The moral: don't trust a man just because you've helped him in the past. Use your mind to attain knowledge which can help you in every contingency.

(17)

For prosperity to last a lifetime is quite rare.
Complete for a moment, it quickly declines.
When everything goes to pieces and disintegrates,
Sit quietly, and don't be like the crow in the story.

....When a certain monk took his noon meal a crow would come and perch nearby and the monk would give it a morsel of food. One day the crow failed to appear and when a fox came by the monk tossed it the crow's morsel. When the crow came later and asked for its food and the monk gave it nothing, it became enraged. It flew to the hide-away of some brigands and told them in crow language that a certain monk had a great quantity of gold coins. One of the brigands who understood crow language went to the monk, seized him, and demanded the gold. The monk said: "I have never had any gold. Whoever told you that I did?" The brigand said: "A crow told me." The monk explained what had happened and the brigand was convinced that there was no gold and that the crow was a gossip. Thereafter the crow never came again to obtain food from the monk.

The moral: if your fate and fortune seem on the decline, don't thoughtlessly blame others.

(18)

Don't go out of your way to honor evil men.
Place no confidence in name and fame.
When a high position is reached, one harms many,
Like the fox in the story that painted himself blue.

....One time, when a painter moved to another house, he left some paint in the cellar. A fox came along, saw the paint, put his paws in it and, delighted with the bright color, painted his entire body. He then went to the other animals and said: "Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jewel and I'm the king of all the animals." Seeing the unusual color, all the animals honored him, even the local lion. When the fox sat on the lion's throne great arrogance arose in him. He began to insult the animals, and was especially haughty among the foxes.

Sometime later the fox sent a parcel of food to his mother who lived on a certain mountain. His mother sent a letter back saying: "Son, occupy yourself with the important affairs of state and don't bother sending food to me." The other foxes quickly heard of this, envy arose in them, and they came to the other animals and said: "Since we foxes are the same as your king, why don't you honor us, too?" The animals replied: "Our king is not a fox. We know this because his color is not the same as yours." The foxes said: "During the first month of spring, on the night of the Belt Star, every fox in the world howls. If a fox were not to howl on that night his hair would fall out. Watch your king on that night and you'll soon learn whether he's a fox or not." On the night of the Belt Star when all the foxes were howling, the blue fox, afraid that his hair would fall out, also howled, and immediately all the animals knew that he was a fox. They told him: "You have deceived us," and killed him. Then from out of the firmament came the voices of the gods:

When those of poor character come to a high position,
Are haughty and needlessly offend all,
Make common, stupid folk their intimates
And abandon and turn away from their own subjects,
They will be quickly destroyed by their own misdeeds,
Like the fox-king that painted himself blue.

The moral: if and when you attain a high position, don't be arrogant and don't cause harm to those below you.

(19)

There are fools who delight in scandalous sins,
Justify their acts and give in to passion.
To attain their goal they do harm to many,
Like the turtle that deceived the birds with its teeth.

....A turtle by the name of 'Happy' once lived in a lake on the banks of which there were many swallows. The turtle would submerge itself out of sight and let its teeth appear above the water. When the swallows saw the teeth, thinking they were bugs, they would swoop down to get them. The turtle would seize the birds and eat them.

One day a swallow by the name of Virtuous-in-All came to the lake to drink, saw the turtle's teeth, and thinking that they were insects, flew down to get them. When the turtle seized it, the swallow said: "Let me say three words. Let me take three steps." The turtle said: "You are a winged creature, so I won't let you take three steps. But you may say three words." The bird said: "Even if you eat me, you won't be satisfied for long, so let me go. I am the king of the birds on this lake. You and I will be friends. The day after tomorrow I'll bring you all the birds you can eat. If it's difficult to get the birds all together, I'll bring them the day after tomorrow" A snake that was nearby overheard this and said: "I'll be witness whether he brings them today, tomorrow, or the next day." The turtle and snake approved and the turtle freed the swallow.

Virtuous-in-All then called together all the birds and told them: "Formerly, because of our ignorance, when we drank from the lake the turtle deceived us and ate us. My own life has been saved by a mere ruse. In the future do not go to the lake to drink and don't try to catch any more insects." The birds then stopped going to the lake. The turtle then told the snake: "I have taken a vow not to kill living beings any more and am practising the Dharma. There is no reason for the

bird's to be afraid, and you, friend, may tell them this." When the snake reported this to Virtuous-in-All, the bird said: "The evil-minded and greedy will do anything and say anything and when they run out of food will even pretend that their teeth are insects. Those who are evil will commit sins to the utmost of their ability and when they are hungry will contrive all kinds of ruses and deceptions. I don't trust 'Happy' and when you see him you may tell him so." Great was the turtle's disappointment when the snake returned and told him this.

The moral: even when you attain knowledge, don't harm others because of greed or gluttony.

(20)

Those who are drunk in their silly conceit,
Totally unaware of their faults and shortcomings,
Priding themselves on their unimportant virtues,
Are like the story of the turtle in the well.

....A one-eyed turtle lived in a well. Once a turtle from the outer sea was washed up onto the shore and chanced to crawl to the well and fell in. The one-eyed turtle asked him who he was and where he had come from and when the turtle explained to him who he was and where he had come from, the one-eyed turtle asked if the sea was as big as the well, half as big, two-thirds as big? When the turtle from the sea tried to explain that the sea was much bigger, the one-eyed turtle said: "Do you mean to say that the sea is as big as this whole well?" The turtle from the sea said: "You have never seen so much water and besides that, you are an ignoramus. You could live in the sea for years and never come to the middle or the end of it and there's no possible way of comparing it with your little well here." The one-eyed turtle said: "There is no such place, you are simply bragging."

The moral: however great your knowledge may be, don't brag or be arrogant. For an ignorant man to be arrogant about his smattering of knowledge which can never compare with the wisdom of the wise is like the story of the turtle in the well.

(21)

Some blind people, ignorant of the fruits of action,
Neither studying nor meditating on the Dharma and
virtue,
Constantly justifying their wrong behavior, even taking pride in it,
Are like the fools who go to sea and bring back stones.

.... When inexperienced merchants go to sea in search of precious jewels and find stones that are pretty and heavy, they bring them back thinking that they are jewels, leaving the dull, light stones which are actually jewels in the rough. When one follows the Supreme Dharma, he abandons name and fame and the hoarding of things and dwells at ease in the Formless with compassion for all. The person who is attached to the world creates name, fame, position, etc., and becomes attached to the form of wealth, fame, arrogance, striving, dress, ornaments, going about importantly and majestically. Ordinary people are unable to understand the difference and have no use for the sages who teach the Formless. They honor the guru who is attached to the world of form, but by relying on him they are like the fools who bring back stones from the sea.

The moral: if you must follow a teacher who is attached to the world, don't do as he does, do as he says.

(22)

Property, wealth, food, cattle,
Things, horses, inheritance, whatever is collected,
Will all be abandoned and death will come,
Like waking from a dream in which you've found a
son.

....During a conversation at the merchants' guild several people agreed that dreams and magic were all nonsense. A magician overheard this, transformed himself into a horse, had another man lead it to the man who claimed that magic was nonsense, and told him: "This horse is for sale; why don't you buy it?" The man said: "I really don't want a horse, but I'll try it out anyhow." By the time the man had mounted it, the horse had galloped through nine valleys, nine mountain passes, and was running toward a steep cliff which overlooked a river. Terrified, the man slid off the horse, fell into the river, and was carried away by the current. Washed to shore, he got to his feet in amazement and saw a beautiful woman approach who asked him where he had come from. The man said: "I don't know where I've come from or where I'm going. The horse I was riding brought me here in a flash." The woman said: "In this country there are no men. You and I will be man and wife and live together," and took him to her house where he lived for four years during which time two daughters and a son were born. One day the eldest daughter fell into the river and drowned and the second daughter, trying to rescue her, drowned also. The woman, unable to bear her grief, threw herself into the river and also drowned. Overcome with sorrow, the man sat holding the baby and sobbing.

This man had fallen asleep in the midst of his friends at the merchant's guild, none of whom had seen the magician or a horse. When he began to cry out in his sleep, his friends shook him and asked: "What's the matter with you? Wake

up!" The man woke up, felt like a fool, and told what had happened. During this time although the shadows had moved only the length of four fingers, the man had aged four years and all were amazed, believing this to have been the work of a sorcerer.

The moral: the things of this life—property, fame, wealth, etc.—are, in the next life, like waking from a dream and are useless. Therefore, without being attached to them, one should perform virtue.

(23)

Inevitably to die while in one's homeland,
Forever to wander and suffer in terrible places,
For the fruits of action to mature without error,
Are like the stories about Udpala, the nun.

....When the Enlightened One was residing at the Jeta Grove in Sravasti, five hundred women of the upper caste became novices under the nun Nanda. Seeing that they were still bound by attachment, Nanda told them: "How can you wealthy women of the upper caste who own great property even become nuns? It would be better if you returned to your homes and lay life and did good deeds there." This made the novices unhappy and they went to the nun Udpalavarna and became novices under her. Udpalavarna told them: "Attachment is like the fire and dry grass, it consumes it completely." She then told them the following story:

"I was the daughter of wealthy parents of the upper caste, was married, and had a son. When I became pregnant again, because my husband's parents were dead and the house was filthy, I left and went to my own parents' home to have my baby. One night I stopped to sleep under a tree and there the baby was born. While I was having the baby a poisonous snake bit my husband who was lying nearby and he died. In the morning I arose, put the elder child on my back, carried the baby in my arms and again set out. Soon I came to a river. Unable to cross it carrying both the children, I left the elder child on the bank and took the baby across. As I was recrossing, the elder child saw me coming, waded out into the river to meet me, and was carried away by the current. I was unable to reach him, and he drowned. When I got the other side again, I found that a wolf had eaten my new-born baby. As I went on toward my parents' house I met a man from our village who told me that my father's house had burned and that my whole family had perished in the fire.

Thus it happened that within one day's time I experienced four terrible tragedies.

"In order to maintain myself I became the wife of another man. I became pregnant again and one day, just as the baby was coming, my husband went to visit some neighbors. I locked the door and my labor pains began. My husband returned drunk and pounded on the door and as there was no one to open it, became enraged, kicked down the door, came in, beat me, killed the baby, cooked it and forced me to eat it. I then became despondent and went to another place where a man whose wife had died asked me to marry him and I accepted. The man soon died and according to the custom of that country they buried me with the corpse. When grave robbers opened the grave and I came out the robber-chieftain took me as his wife but was soon executed and I was buried with his corpse. After three days and nights in the grave wolves dug into the grave and I was able to escape. After experiencing all this misery, I thought to myself: 'Now I shall take a vow from the All-knowing Buddha and practise the Dharma.' Without clothing, and full of shame, I went to the Lord and, covering my two breasts with my hands, sat down on the ground. Compassionately, the Lord said to Ananda: 'Ananda, give this beggar woman your robe.' When Ananda gave me his robe I put it on, bowed before the Lord, and asked to be ordained. Then the Lord of the Nine Kinds of Being directed the monks to ordain me as a novice, the mother-teacher taught me the Four Truths, and by dint of great effort in meditation I attained the fruit of an arhat and clearly understood the three times."

The novices then asked: "Mother-teacher, what was the former cause of your great misery?"

Udpala said: "Long ago a householder had two wives. The first wife was barren and when to the second wife a son was born the householder showed her greater affection and the first wife, becoming envious, killed the baby by piercing

the soft spot on its head with a needle. When the second wife accused the first of murdering her baby, the first wife said: 'If I have killed your baby, in all future lifetimes may my husband die from the bite of a poisonous snake. May my son be eaten by a wolf. May I eat my own child's flesh. May I be buried alive. May my parents' house be burnt down!' It was I who was that first wife and during five-hundred lifetimes I underwent terrible torments because of that deed."

The novices then asked: "By doing what deeds were you able to attain the fruit of arhatship?"

Udpala said: "Long ago, when I was the wife of a householder, I offered food to many Pratyekabuddhas with the aspiration of becoming an arhat in a future life. Now I have met the Buddha and become an arhat, but because of past deeds I still experience agony as though I were being cleaved from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet with an iron cleaver."

* * *

The story of Sangharakshita....In the city of Sravasti Sangharakshita, the Son of Buddharakshita, had become a disciple of Shariputra and taken the monastic vows. Upon a certain occasion five hundred merchants who had been his childhood friends wished to go to sea in search of precious gems and, believing that there would be no danger, invited Sangharakshita to go with them. When Sangharakshita asked the Buddha about this, the Lord said: "Be patient in danger and disaster." The five hundred merchants put out to sea taking Sangharakshita with them and when they were well out the Nagas seized the ship and cried: "Give Sangharakshita to us!" Thinking: 'This is what the Buddha meant', Sangharakshita jumped into the sea whereupon the Nagas released the ship. When he arrived at the Naga realm

Sangharakshita bowed to the temple and the caitya of the Seven Tathagatas and sat down on a seat which the Nagas had prepared for him. The Nagas then indicated that they wished him to teach the Dharma and as he did this he noticed that although one of them listened with reverence, one kept blinking his eyes, another turned his back, and still another sat at a distance from him. The monk thought: "It must be because they don't believe what I'm telling them," and asked the reason. A Naga told him: "It's not because they don't believe; the one blinking his eyes has eye trouble, the one with his back to you has trouble breathing, and the one sitting at a distance has an infection of the skin." Fearing that he might catch these diseases, Sangharakshita turned pale. The Nagas then asked the reason for his coming and when he had told them about the merchants and their search for precious gems, they took him back to the ship.

When the ship reached the shore that night all lay down to rest and Sangharakshita was overcome with so deep a sleep that when the merchants set sail the next morning he still slept and was left behind. When he awoke and found himself alone he set out walking and soon came to a temple where he sat down to rest and was given food by the monks. At noon when the monks took up their begging bowls, these turned into hammers and clubs, flew through the air and struck the monks, causing them great suffering. After noon everything was as before and when Sangharakshita asked the reason for what had happened, the monks told him: "We were formerly monks under the Buddha Kashyapa. Because we made error of wrangling during the noon meal this hell sometimes appears." Sangharakshita remained at the temple and the next day at noon the food turned into molten lead which sprayed the monks and burned them. When asked the reason for this, the monks said: "Formerly, when we were monks under the Buddha Kashyapa, we made the error of being stingy with the oil offerings. We begrudged it and re-

fused to distribute it and hoarded it in the temple where it deteriorated. Because of that we were reborn in this hell and from here will be reborn in the great hell." The temple then became as before but the next noon it burst into flames and the monks were burned and underwent terrible suffering. When asked about this they told Sangharakshita: "When we were monks under the Buddha Kashyapa we were careless about keeping our vows and were driven out of the monastery. This enraged us and in revenge we burned down many of the honest monks' dwellings. Because of that we have been reborn in this hell and later will be reborn in the great hell."

Sangharakshita walked on and came to a group of living beings who had the appearance of walls, beams, trees, leaves, flowers, fruits, mills, brooms, mortars and pestles, and kettles, and beings who were emaciated and covered with a network of veins. When he finally arrived at his own country, he asked the Buddha about them and the Lord told him: "Those beings you saw were people who spit on the walls of temples and have turned into walls. Those who appear as columns formerly wiped the mucus from their noses on temple columns. Those who appear as trees, flowers, leaves, grain, mills, and brooms, formerly appropriated those things which belonged to the Sangha and have turned into them. The one who looks like a bowl was a novice whose task it was to wash the bowls of the Sangha. One day when he had served tea to the monks and was washing the bowls, a monk came from outside and asked if tea was going to served. The novice became angry and said: 'Tea time is over. Can't you see that I'm washing the bowls?' His present form is the result of that. The being who looks like a mortar was a monk who once obtained some grain and told a novice to grind it for him. The novice said: 'Wait a bit, I'll grind it in a little while.' This angered the monk who told him, 'Since grinding is not forbidden to us, I'll just pulverize you and

we'll see what you have to say then.' The being in the form of a kettle was the Sangha's cook who once became angry at the monks and smashed the kettle. The one covered with a network of veins was the storekeeper of the Sangha who was so lazy that he distributed the summer things in the winter and the winter things in the summer. All of this is the hell of those beings."

* * *

The Story of the Steward.... Near the city of Sravasti there was a filthy swamp into which the people threw their night soil. A lizard with a human head had been born in this swamp and underwent great suffering by being nibbled by other lizards, starving, and eating offal. Many people came there to see it and upon a certain occasion when the Buddha came, the lizard asked him the cause of this. The Lord said: "Son, are you not Saldaba who once studied the Tripitaka?" Through the Buddha's power the lizard recalled former births and said: "Yes, Lord, I was Saldaba." When Ananda asked about this the Buddha said: "Aeons ago, during the time of the Buddha Vishvabhuj, there was a monk who studied the Tripitaka and was the steward for the Sangha. Although many donors gave lavish gifts of gold and silver, the monk prepared terrible food for the monks and when they complained that it was impossible to eat it, became angry and told them: 'I wish you had to lie in a swamp and eat offal.' Later he repented this and confessed his sin, but because of the fruits of action he has been reborn as an animal until now and undergone terrible suffering. When the kalpa of the five hundred Buddhas comes he will become a monk under the Buddha Vairochana and will, because of having committed the five deadly sins, fall into hell and undergo torments for many thousands of years. He will then become a monk under another Buddha Vairochana and through practising the Dharma will be liberated from samsara and attain

the fruits of an arhat. This lizard was that steward at that time."

* * *

The Story of King Disaster....Long ago there was born in hell a king who was blind and had an enormous body covered with sores. Living things constantly gnawed at him from the top of his head to the soles of his feet and he was in constant agony. If he went out into the fields lions, tigers and other animals tore him to shreds. If he went up into the sky vultures, crows and other birds pecked him. If he went into the woods and thickets, thorns and blades of grass turned into swords and spears and stabbed him. If he went to cities or monasteries men with weapons would attack him, and he lived in constant agony. For the benefit of beings the Buddha, by his miraculous powers, brought him to a place near Sravasti and placed him alongside the road where people, hearing his screams and cries, came to see him. When the Buddha and his disciples came there, the Lord asked: "Are you not King Disaster?" Through the power of the Buddha the creature recalled his past and said: "Yes, I am King Disaster." When Ananda asked about this, the Lord said: "In aeons long past there were five hundred arhats under the Buddha Kashyapa who lived in a forest. The king of that country whose name was Disaster once went to that forest with his harem and, as the women walked about gathering flowers and berries, they saw the arhats sitting in silence and great peace, bowed reverently to them, sat down at one side, and requested them to teach the Dharma. When the king heard the Dharma being taught he was enraged and commanded his officers as follows: 'Beat some of these monks with a lash until the skin comes off their back! Hang some of them on a tree and stab them with swords and spears! Give some of them alive to the dogs! Chop some of

them to pieces and throw the pieces in the four directions!' This creature that you see here was that king at that time. Because of the sin he committed, he had been reborn in the terrible hell. Because he saw with cruel eyes, he is always reborn blind. Because he had people beaten, his body is always covered with sores and insects torment him. Because he had people cut with knives, wherever he goes living beings eat him and he is always in agony. Until the good kalpa of the five hundred Buddhas he will continue to be reborn in hell and will suffer. He will then be reborn as an evil man who will set traps for wild animals in the forest. He will see a Pratyekabuddha in the forest and think: 'As long as he is here no game will come, and kill him. Because of this he will be reborn in hell and will undergo suffering for a long time. He will eventually become a Buddhist monk by the name of Guru and will attain arhatship, but because of the fruit of action the wives of the king of that country will hear the Dharma from him, the king will have him beaten, he will die, and eventually pass beyond suffering."

* * *

The Story of Little Humpback......In the city of Sravasti a son was once born to a poverty-stricken brahmin. Being ugly and undersized, was given the name of "Little Humpback". As soon as he was born his mother's milk dried up and she tried to nourish him on cow's milk which she begged, but because such milk was hard to find the child almost starved to death. When the boy grew up he had faith in the Dharma and became a monk, but when he went on the alms-round no one would give him alms and he always went hungry—the alms would run out just as it was his turn to receive them, or the almsgiver would overlook him. One day when the other monks had gone to collect alms and he had been left to guard the monastery, while sweeping the courtyard

he found excellent food. The next day the same thing happened and when he ate it his body became strong. Through diligent meditation, he became an arhat. But the next day and the next, when he went on the alms-round he was unable to obtain any food. Ananda heard of this and on the third day requested a householder to give him food, but the householder forgot. On the fourth day Ananda thought: 'Little Humpback is going to starve to death,' and begged food for him, but as he was bringing it to him a dog seized it and ran away. On the fifth day Maudgalyayana brought him food but a raven seized it. On the sixth day Shariputra took him food but Little Humpback's doors and windows were closed. By his supernormal powers Shariputra entered and placed the bowl of food before him but the bowl fell to the floor. Shariputra then took the bowl and placed it in his hand, but the bowl disappeared. Shariputra then tried to put the food in his mouth but the mouth disappeared. When noon had passed the mouth again appeared and said: 'I'm thirsty.' Shariputra filled the bowl with water, but when he gave it to him ashes appeared in the water. As soon as Little Humpback drank the water he soared up into the sky, fire flamed from his body, water gushed forth, and after demonstrating other wonders he attained nirvana. The monks then cremated his body and erected a stupa over the ashes.

When the Buddha was asked about this, he said: "Long ago there was a rich man who attained virtue by reason of his great charity. When he died his wife continued to give but her son tried to dissuade her and when his mother continued to give, he locked her up in a room and gave her neither food nor drink. Even when the mother promised to refrain from giving gifts the son refused to release her and a week later, when the other children broke down the door and let her out and she begged for water, the son, with murderous thoughts, put ashes in the water and when she drank it she died. Because of that sin the son was reborn in hell

and underwent countless sufferings for thousands of years. He was reborn many times and experienced the torture of starvation, thirst, and death from drinking polluted water. Even now, although he has become an arhat, he still suffers because of the fruit of that act. During the time of the Buddha Kashyapa he also became a monk, but gossiped about the other monks and was an obstacle to them. He later repented of this, but because of the fruit of action was reborn five-hundred times as a preta. Because, while he was a monk, he had followed the pure course and at death made the wish-prayer: 'May I, in a future life, become an arhat,' he had now attained the state of an arhat."

* * *

The Story of "Cripple"......In the city of Sravasti there was born to the wife of a householder a son who was unable to walk and was named "Cripple". The boy's father apprenticed him to a seamstress and he quickly learned how to sew and became an expert tailor. Upon a certain occasion when there was a festival a man's wife lent his hat and robe to another man, but the man was careless and tore them. The woman brought Cripple to mend them before her husband came home, but as he was working on them she heard her husband coming. She quickly took Cripple to the storehouse, put him in a big basket, covered it and sealed it.

At that time there were five hundred brigands living in a nearby forest. That night some of them came to the storehouse, broke in, and seeing the sealed basket thought it was filled with jewels and took it away. As they carried it along the road the moon came out and Cripple wet his pants. Seeing the drops of water reflected in the moonlight, the brigands thought they were rays of the water-crystal jewels. When the basket was opened and Cripple came out, the brigands roared with laughter.

The householder's wife had awakened during the night and, knowing that brigands had taken away the basket, thought: 'This makes me both glad and sad, and the brigands will have mixed emotions and both laugh and cry, too'.

Back in the forest the brigands were now angry and said to each other: "What do we want with this scarecrow? He's caused us a lot of trouble and for that we'll just kill him and make an offering to the gods." They swept the ground, gathered flowers and incense, and sharpened a sword. Cripple watched all this with terror. With a sincere heart he prayed to the Buddha Shakyamuni and took refuge in him. The Lord heard his prayer, transformed himself into the form of a deva, and appeared there saying: "I do not require human beings as a sacrifice. Free this man. If you wish to hear the Dharma, sit down and I shall explain it to you." The brigands bowed and sat down and when the Lord had taught them the Dharma they became stream winners. Cripple became a once-returner. The Buddha then appeared to them in his true form and great faith arose in the brigands. They became monks and through the power of dhyana attained the fruits of an arhat. Cripple thought: 'If I were not deficient in my limbs, I too would become a monk.' Immediately his limbs became whole and through the power of his prayer and request he became a monk and an arhat.

When the monks asked about this, the Buddha said: "Long ago, during the time of the Buddha Kashyapa, there were two brothers. The elder had heard the Dharma from the Buddha and had become a once-returner. The younger brother did the housework and once became angry and shouted: "In cold weather I freeze and in hot weather I roast doing all the work, while you sit in the house like a cripple doing nothing." The elder brother forgave him, and knowing that he had committed a grievous sin, told him: "This is what I have achieved," and displayed many miraculous powers. He then persuaded him to repent and confess, which

the younger brother did, and later both of them became monks. The elder brother became an arhat while the younger, following the pure path, made a wish-prayer at death to become an arhat in the next life. This Cripple was that younger brother who, because of his harsh words, has always been reborn as a cripple. Because he followed the pure Path and because of his vow, he has now become an arhat."

There are many legends, only a few of which have been given here, which illustrate the fruits of action. If there are those who wish to know more about this, they should consult the following books: *The Hundred Works, The Hundred Views, The Ocean of Narratives*, the *Vinaya*, and many others. And one should strive with all one's might to refrain from evil deeds and to perform virtuous acts.

(24)

To think of this life which lasts but a moment
As unending and cling to it is a terrible error.
Like the magic creations of the female demon,
Death comes in a second and your destination is uncertain.

....Long ago a man had a wife who was not a human being but a female demon. One day when a visitor came to her house, in a moment's time the woman plowed a field, sowed wheat, harvested it, threshed it, ground it into flour and baked a loaf of bread, all before his eyes, then gave him the bread to eat. As soon as he had eaten it she took a stick, and crying "Bam," hit him, where upon he immediately turned into a donkey which she made carry loads. Later she wanted another donkey and when another visitor came, she did the same thing, but the man was suspicious when he noticed that the woman used a different flour for the bread she made for herself. When she went out for a moment he exchanged the loaves of bread. The woman didn't know this, ate the bread intended for the visitor, and when she stood up and shouted "Bam" and tried to hit the visitor with her stick, he took the stick away from her, struck her with it, and shouted "Bam yourself" whereupon the woman turned into a donkey. As they were going along the road they met the woman's husband and when the donkey brayed the man recognized her.He took her away from the visitor, took her home, and by means of magic turned her back into a woman.

The moral: one minute you may be a donkey, the next minute you may be dead. Neither is certain. But since you are not eternal, exert yourself in the Dharma now.

(25)

Having obtained this excellent human body but not following Dharma,
The poor people pass on, saying: 'Prayers at the end'.
But in the end they find an evil state and are tormented,
As the people who died in the land of Takasila.

....Long ago, in the village of Saketa which was on the outskirts of Takasila, there was born to the householder Balasena a son who had golden earrings in his ears at birth. When these were examined they were found to be worth ten million measures of gold. When the time came to give the baby a name he was called "Abhijit Born With Earrings" because he had been born under the constellation Abhijit. As the boy grew up he watched his father till his fields and decided that he would rather go to sea. His parents attempted to dissuade him, but it was useless and finally they invited five hundred merchant seamen, offered them a banquet, and the father told them: "This is my son Abhijit. Take him with you and treat him as your own son." The merchants agreed to this, and the father, knowing that horses and elephants are hard to handle and difficult to feed, but that donkeys are intelligent and easy to care for, gave his son two of these and told him: "Son, stay with the seamen. Don't go ahead of them or lag behind them because brigands will attack from the front and cowardly thieves will come from the back. You stay in the middle." He also gave him two servants and told them to stay with the boy. Just as the boy was departing his mother burst out crying. The boy told her: "Mother, are you showing an evil omen just as I leave? Is this to bring me bad luck?" The mother said: "Son, don't be angry. Whoever speaks harsh words to his parents incurs terrible sin. You must repent of this immediately." The boy bowed to his parents and departed with the merchant seamen who set sail

and eventually arrived at the Jewel Island in the sea where they obtained many precious stones and then sailed on until they reached the further shore. That night Abhijit took his two servants and the donkeys and left the merchants. He first sent one of the servants to see what they were doing and the servant, finding the merchants asleep, lay down beside them and also slept. The boy then sent the other servant to see what was detaining the first one, and finding the merchants packing and making ready for departure, went with them. Eventually the merchants arrived in their own country and when the boy's parents asked what had become of him, some told them that he had gone on ahead and others said that he would come later. Thereupon the parents had notices put up in the temples and at the city gates which said: "If our son is alive, may he quickly return to us, but if he is dead, may he obtain a good rebirth." In great sorrow, they wept until they lost their sight.

When Abhijit awoke the next morning he found only the two donkeys. He mounted one and set out in search of the merchants, but the wind had obliterated their trail and the donkey followed it by scent. When darkness came on the boy whipped it to make it hurry. The donkey became confused, lost the trail and went into a forest. Seeing it exhausted, its tongue hanging out, and stumbling blindly about, a thought of compassion arose in the boy. He got off, left the donkey to graze, and set out on foot. Soon he came to a huge iron building, in the doorway of which sat a fierce black giant with red eyes and rippling muscles holding a club. The boy asked: "Sir, may I get a drink of water here?" but although he asked this thrice, there was no answer and the boy entered the building and sat down. Immediately there appeared before him hundreds of thousands of pretas who were black as burnt wood, their bodies nothing but skin and bone. Their hair was matted and tousled, their stomachs as large as mountains, and their mouths as tiny as the

eye of a needle. They cried piteously and pleaded: "Give us water! We are perishing from thirst." The boy said: "I myself am thirsty and searching for water. How can I give you anything to drink?" The pretas said: "For twelve years we have not even heard the word 'water'." The boy asked: "Who are you and because of what deeds have you been born like this?" The pretas said: "Alas, we have obtained this birth because we became angry at others and used harsh language. We were never charitable and now we are bound by our greed." As the boy left, the giant with the club disappeared and the pretas shouted after him: "When we were young and strong we were haughty and greedy for wealth and property. We never brought forth virtue and for this reason we have been born as starving ghosts and have to undergo this torture."

Going on, the boy came to a beautiful castle in front of which sat a handsome youth dallying with four exquisite goddesses. They invited the boy into the castle, gave him food and drink, and told him that he might spend the night there but would have to leave as soon as the sun came up. When dawn broke the castle and the goddesses disappeared and there appeared in their place four black dogs that attacked the handsome youth, tore his body to bits and ate his flesh. Then when the sun went down again, the castle and the goddesses reappeared. The handsome youth then told the boy: "I was a butcher in the city of Takasila. Every day I killed sheep and the Noble Kaundinya would come and tell me not to commit this sin, but I didn't listen. One day the Noble Kaundinya asked me whether I killed the sheep during the day or at night. When I said that I killed them during the day, he said: "'Then observe the precepts at night,' and he gave me the vow for the night precepts. Because I observed the precepts during the night but killed during the day, this is the result. At night I live in delight, but during the day I have to undergo agony." He thought

for a moment, then said: "When you return to Takasila, go find my son who is also a butcher. Tell him that his father says that he should no longer commit the sin of killing and that beneath the ground where he kills the sheep there is a pot of gold. He is to dig it up and use it for his needs and from time to time make offerings of food to the Noble Kaundinya in my name and say prayers for me."

Going on, the boy came to a beautiful palace in which lived a man and a goddess. They gave him food and drink and told him: "You may stay here during the day, but not at night." When the sun went down he went outside and when darkness fell the palace disappeared and the goddess turned into a snake that entered the man's body at the anus, crawled through the seven storeys of his body, and entered his brain which it ate until the sun rose. Then the palace and the goddess appeared as before. The man told the boy: "I was a brahmin in the city of Takasila who indulged in lewd conduct. The Noble Kaundinya, unable to restrain me from this kind of activity, persuaded me to practise restraint during the day and until dark I observed the precepts, but at night I again indulged in debauchery. The result is that I now experience peace and joy during the day but undergo terrible agony at night. Please go see my son when you return to Takasila. He is also a profilgate. Tell him that his father says that he must stop his sinning and that beneath the hearthstone there is a pot of gold which he may have to support himself. From time to time he should give almsfood to the Noble Kaundinya in my name and pray for me."

Going on, the boy came to a pretty house in which lived a beautiful woman who had four pretas tied to the legs of the table. The woman gave the boy food and drink, then went out, telling him not to give anything to the pretas. The pretas begged piteously and the boy gave them food, but for one of the pretas the food turned into a pile of dust, for another an iron ball. One of them ate the flesh of his own

hand, and the food he gave the fourth turned into blood. When the woman returned she asked why the boy had fed the pretas, then she told him who they were, saying: "These were my husband, my son, my daughter-in-law, and a servant woman. I was the wife of a brahmin in the city of Takasila and upon a certain occasion when I was preparing a feast, the Noble Kaundinya came by and I offered him the choicest morsels of food. This enraged my husband who screamed at me that the best food should go to the brahmins and that the food was not being prepared for bald-headed beggars. He added that as far as he was concerned they could eat dust. My son said he would like to see them eat iron balls. Because I sent gifts and food from the feast to the Buddhist monks, my daughter-in-law became angry, ate the best food herself and gave me the worst. When I asked her if she had not done this she said: "If I have, may I eat my own flesh!" When I sent the servant woman with food to the Buddhist brothers, she ate the food along the way and took only the scraps and leftovers to the monks. I heard about this and when I questioned her she said: "If it is true that I did this, may I drink blood!" Then I told all of them that I hoped they would reap the fruit of those actions. This was a wrong aspiration and because of that I was reborn as the overseer of these pretas instead of among the gods of the Thirty-Three. When you return to Takasila you will find my daughter who lives by selling her own body. Tell her that her mother wants her to stop sinning and that beneath her father's old house there are eight iron pots filled with gold which she should take to live on and that from time to time she should offer food to the Noble Kaundinya in my name and pray for me."

Abhijit wandered on for twelve years more than once again returned to the house of the pretas. The woman asked him if he now wished to return to Takasila, and when he said that he did, the woman told the pretas to take him to a

park near the city and return immediately. While he slept the pretas carried him there in one second. When he awoke he found the notice which his parents had written and knew that they thought he was dead and had despaired. He decided to become a monk and went to the Noble Kaundinya who told him that he should first fulfil the requests of the people and visit his parents, then he might become a monk. He then went to the butcher's son and to the others who, finding the buried treasure, had faith and began to practise virtue. Then, going to his parents, he bowed to them and said: "Father and mother, let your minds be at rest, I have returned to life." Knowing their son by his voice, they hugged him and sobbed and their tears washed away the film from their eyes and they could see. When the son told them that he wished to become a monk they asked him to wait until they died. Through hearing the Dharma from the Noble Kaundinya the parents saw Truth and the boy became a never-returne. When the parents passed on he became a monk under Kaundinya and by dint of effort in meditation attained the state of an arhat.

The moral: make aspirations for the future life and constantly and persistently create virtue in this one.

(26)

Those who have no devotion to the Supreme Dharma
And shamelessly busy themselves with the things
of this life
Will finally come to grief and be despised by many,
As in the story of the black magician of Birala.

....In olden times in a place called Birala there was a black sorcerer called Tapasya who had a faithful maidservant who did all the inside and outside chores for him, but the magician was cruel to her, abused her, and she ran away and became a nun. The magician then had to do all the work himself and the people laughed at him.

The moral: because harshness and cruelty will cause suffering for oneself and cause others to criticize, it is better to use kindness and to try to understand the difference between virtue and non-virtue.

(27)

If you have wealth and it is not used for charity or
virtue,
But you use it to harm and oppose others,
You will become degenerate and tormented,
As in the story of 'Repulsive' in the city of Sumara.

....Long ago there was born to a wealthy householder of the city of Sumara a son who was blind and whose features were hideous. The parents felt aversion for the child and one night took him out and abandoned him. Early the next morning the Buddha passed by and when many people had gathered there, the Lord said to the baby: "Son, are you not 'Repulsive'?" Through the power of the Buddha the child recalled former births and said: "Yes, Lord, I was indeed 'Repulsive'." When Ananda asked about this the Buddha said: "In times long past this baby was a king by the name of Repulsive. Whenever he and his harem went out all the people had to close the doors of their houses and put curtains over the windows and if anyone was caught peeping his eyes were put out. For this reason there were many blind people in that country. One day when the king and his women were in a remote place they met a Pratyekabuddha and faith arose in the women of the harem. This so enraged the king that he had the Pratyekabuddha's eyes torn out, but in compassion for the king the noble one rose into the sky, fire flamed from his body, and he performed other wonders. Seeing this, the king repented and confessed his sin, but because of the fruit of that act he was reborn blind many times and underwent terrible suffering during five hundred births. He was then reborn five hundred times as a preta, as a blind animal, as a blind man, and experienced awful suffering. Now, at the end of the present kalpa, and after still more endless kalpas shall have passed, the Buddha Chittabhadra will come to this world and this child will then be reborn as a cripple, become a monk under that Buddha, and will quickly attain the fruits

of an arhat. Still, because of the fruit of that act, a crow will peck his eyes out. At that time all his sufferings will come to an end."

Also......In a certain country there was an exceedingly greedy woman who never gave to charity. One day when a Pratyekabuddha came to beg alms, the woman became angry, gave him nothing, and said: "You have a mouth like a dog's and your hair looks like a horse's mane. People like you are not a field of offerings." The woman immediately died and was reborn in a nearby place as an offal-eating preta which was seen by many people and suffered terribly.

Also......In the city of Sumara a man had a wife who was ugly and a scold. One day when a noble monk came to beg alms and the woman refused, the monk begged again and again and the woman gave him a tiny piece of bread which the monk by means of his super-normal powers made larger. Seeing this, the woman took it back and when the monk begged for it again the woman said: "First change your eyes into glass." The monk did this. Then the woman told him to transform himself into the form of her eldest son. When the monk did this, she told him to divide his body into two pieces. The monk divided his body. Thereupon the woman's maidservant told her: "Mistress, because of what you have just done we are certainly going to die. This holy man was a friend of the king when they were both young and was formerly the queen's teacher. If anyone harms the monks in any way the punishment is having one's hands cut off. What do you suppose the punishment will be for dividing this monk's body?" This frightened the woman and she said: "I'll bury it," but when she dug a hole and put the divided body into it, it kept coming back to the surface of the ground and she was unable to move it. She then prayed to the saint and replaced her greediness with generosity and devotion.

The moral: don't be greedy. Don't harm others. Exert yourself in acts of virtue.

If, through envy, one harms a friend,
One will suffer much in this lifetime.
One will also be tormented in a future life,
As in the tale of the brahmin's son called Fox.

....Long ago a king's son called Youth and a brahmin's son called Fox went away to school together. The prince studied hard and learned well, but the brahmin's son was lazy, refused to study, failed, and envy arose in him. When they were returning home and the prince became weary and lay down at the foot of a tree and fell asleep, the brahmin's son tied his hair to the tree and killed him. As he was dying the prince said: "Write down the word *Asmarashiga* and take it with you." The brahmin's son did this and returned home.

One day when the king was looking through the brahmin's son's things he came across the note and showed it to many of his brahmins asking them if they knew what it meant, but none of them could understand it. The king then told them: "Find out what it means. If you do not, I'll have you executed." Terrified, one of the brahmins ran away and climbed a tree. During the night the Aishigi children became hungry and cried and their mother told them: "Don't cry. Within a month many brahmins will be killed, then you'll have all the blood to drink." When the children asked why the brahmins were going to be killed, their mother told them: "Because they don't know what the word *Asmarashiga* mean." The children asked: "What does it means?" The mother told them: "It means: 'Dear father, because of envy my dear friend tied my hair to a tree in a faraway place and murdered me'." When the brahmin heard this he quickly returned to the king, reported what he had heard, and saved the brahmins' lives. Fox, the son of the brahmin, was executed.

The moral: never become envious of the learning of others and exert yourself to the utmost in the Dharma.

The above legends illustrate action and its fruits. We see that we should honor our elders, be compassionate to those beneath us, and make every effort to cut off sin and to create virtue thus benefiting both ourselves and others. That even animals are capable of doing this is clear from the following story:

In ancient times was a king of Benaras by the name of Pure Giver who ruled according to the Dharma. At that time in a forest of his kingdom lived a grouse, a hare, a monkey, and an elephant who dwelt together in friendship and spoke the human language. One day they had a discussion and said: "Because we don't know who is the eldest, how can we know whom to honor? Which of us should be the leader?" The elephant said: "When I was a child this Nyagrada tree was as tall as I was." The monkey said: "When I was a child it was shorter than I." The hare said: "When I was a child it was only three fingers tall and had two leaves on it and I used to drink the dew from them." The grouse said: "This tree grew from a seed that came from my droppings." They then knew who was the eldest and the elephant honored the monkey, both of them honored the hare, all of them honored the grouse. All of them observed the precepts, never killing, etc., and in that country there was never illness nor drought and all beings lived in peace. The king of that country believed that this state of peace and welfare was the result of his own righteousness, but one day he heard a rishi who was endowed with super-normal powerssay that it was because of the righteousness of the four animals. Thereafter the king and many of his subjects cut off the five sins: taking life, stealing, adultery, lying, and drinking intoxicants. Because they lived pure lives the times were good and beings lived in peace. When these people passed beyond this existence they were reborn in the realm of the gods of the Thirty-Three.

According to the life of the Buddha entitled the *Kalpaurksa Shastra*, our Teacher, the Enlightened One, was that grouse, Shariputra was the hare, Maudgalyayana was the monkey, and Ananda was the elephant.

By virtue of having written the *Jewel Ornament* which is a commentary to *A Drop of Nourishment*, may I and all beings correctly understand the Dharma and the ways of the world. By right action may we live in joy and peace and finally attain the supreme enlightenment of a Buddha.

* * *

Mangalam
Mongol translator unknown.

A DROP OF NOURISHMENT FOR PEOPLE
and its commentary
THE JEWEL ORNAMENT

A Drop of Nourishment for People by Nagarjuna and its commentary *The Jewel Ornament* provides a very fascinating reading on the meanings of compassion, virtuous deeds and the law of *Karma* in the theory and practice of Buddhist philosophy. Through numerous fables and legends that are at once delightful and frightening, the text and its commentary reveals the impermanent nature of *Samsara* and prompts the reader towards the Buddhist ideals of *Nirvana*. Not only adults but children will also enjoy and benefit by reading *A Drop of Nourishment* and especially its commentary *The Jewel Ornament* which delves into the world of fables, fairy tales and legends to bring home the Buddhist message of love, compassion and kindliness to all sentient beings.

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